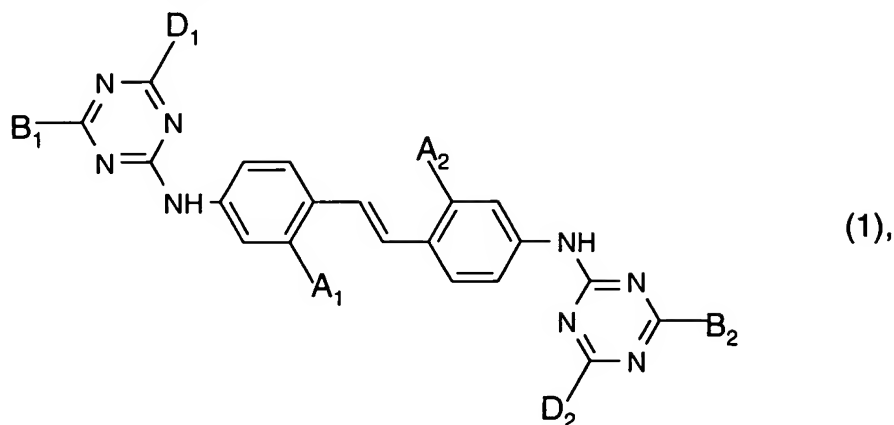
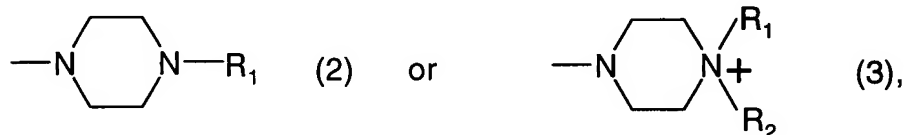


1. (currently amended): A compound of the formula



wherein

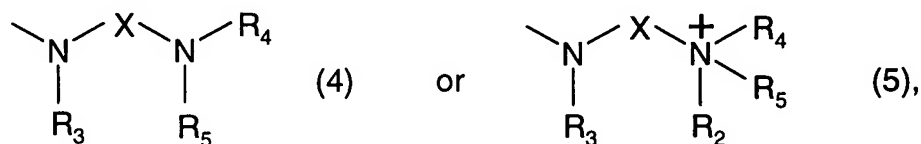
A₁ and A₂ each, independently of one another, represent -SO₃⁻ or -SO₃M, where M represents hydrogen, an alkaline or alkaline earth metal, ammonium or alkylammonium, B₁ and B₂ each, independently of one another, represent the moiety



in which

R₁ represents hydrogen, a straight-chain C₁-C₁₂alkyl or branched C₃-C₁₂alkyl group, which C₂-C₁₂alkyl or ~~or~~ C₃-C₁₂alkyl group, respectively, may be interrupted by one or two heteroatoms and is unsubstituted or substituted by one or two -OH, -OC₁-C₄alkyl, -NH₂, -NHC₁-C₄alkyl, -N(C₁-C₄alkyl)₂, -N-pyrrolidino, -N-piperidino, -N-morpholino or -N⁺(C₁-C₄alkyl)₃ groups and R₂ represents C₁-C₄alkyl, C₂-C₄hydroxyalkyl, -CH₂CONH₂, -CH₂COOH or -CH₂COO C₁-C₄alkyl or, alternatively,

B₁ and B₂ each, independently of one another, represent a group of the formula



in which

R₃, R₄ and R₅ each, independently of each other, represent hydrogen, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₂-C₄hydroxyalkyl, the group -X'-NR₆R₇ or the group -X'-N⁺R₃R₆R₇, whereby at least one of the substituents R₄ and/or R₅ represents -X'-NR₆R₇ or -X'-N⁺R₃R₆R₇,

X and X' each, independently of each other, represent a straight-chain C₂-C₈alkylene or branched C₃-C₈alkylene chain, which is unsubstituted or substituted by one or two -OH or -C(=O)- groups,

R₆ and R₇ each, independently of each other, represent hydrogen, C₁-C₄alkyl or, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bound, complete a pyrrolidino, piperidino or morpholino ring and R₂ is as previously defined and each

D₁ and D₂, independently of one another, are either defined as for B₁ and B₂ or represent halogen, -NH₂, C₁-C₄monoalkyl- or dialkylamino, said alkyl groups being unsubstituted or substituted by C₁-C₄alkoxy, amino, mono- or di-C₁-C₄alkylamino or tri-C₁-C₄alkylammonium; C₂-C₄hydroxyalkylamino, C₂-C₄di(hydroxyalkyl)amino, anilino, an aniline monosulphonic acid or sulphonamide residue or a 5- or 6-membered, saturated heterocyclic ring or, alternatively, mixtures of compounds of formula (1).

2. (original): A compound of formula (1), according to claim 1, in which the residues A₁ and A₂ are identical, B₁ and B₂ are identical and D₁ and D₂ are identical.

3. (currently amended): A three-component mixture of compounds of formula (1), according to claim 1, comprising two components, as defined in claim 2 in which the residues A₁ and A₂ are identical, B₁ and B₂ are identical and D₁ and D₂ are identical, and a third component in which the residues A₁ and A₂ are identical, but either, B₁ and B₂ are different or D₁ and D₂ are different.

4. (currently amended): A compound of formula (1), according to claims 1 ~~or 2~~, in which the moieties B₁ and/or B₂ are represented by the formulae (2) and/or (3) and in which

R₁ represents hydrogen, a straight-chain C₁-C₄alkyl or branched C₃-C₄alkyl group which may be interrupted by one or two heteroatoms and is unsubstituted or substituted by one or two -OH, -OC₁-C₄alkyl, -NH₂, -NHC₁-C₄alkyl, -N(C₁-C₄alkyl)₂, -N-pyrrolidino, -N-piperidino, -N-morpholino or -N⁺(C₁-C₄alkyl)₃ groups,

A₁ and A₂ are both -SO₃⁻ or -SO₃M,

M, R₂, D₁ and D₂ being as defined according to claim 1.

5. (original): A compound of formula (1), according to claim 4, in which the moieties

B₁ and B₂ are identical and represented by the formulae (2) or (3), whereby

R₁ represents hydrogen, a straight-chain C₁-C₄alkyl or branched C₃-C₄alkyl group which may be unsubstituted or substituted by one or two -OH, -OC₁-C₄alkyl, -NH₂, -NHC₁-C₄alkyl, -N(C₁-C₄alkyl)₂, -N-pyrrolidino, -N-piperidino, -N-morpholino or -N⁺(C₁-C₄alkyl)₃ group,

R₂ represents C₁-C₄alkyl,

A₁ and A₂ are both -SO₃⁻ or -SO₃M, whereby

M represents hydrogen, potassium or sodium and

D₁ and D₂ are identical and may be represented by halogen, especially chlorine, -NH₂,

C₁-C₄monoalkyl- or dialkylamino, said alkyl groups being unsubstituted or substituted by mono- or di-C₁-C₄alkylamino or tri-C₁-C₄alkylammonium; C₂-C₄hydroxyalkylamino, C₂-C₄-di(hydroxyalkyl)amino, anilino, an aniline sulphonamide or sulphonic acid residue or a morpholino-, piperidino- or -N-C₁-C₄substituted piperazino ring.

6. (currently amended): A compound of formula (1), according to claims 1-~~or~~2, in which the moieties B₁ and/or B₂ are represented by the formulae (4) and/or (5), whereby

R₄ represents the group -X'-NR₆R₇ or the group -X'-N⁺R₃R₆R₇,

X and X' each, independently of each other, represent a straight-chain C₂-C₈alkylene or branched C₃-C₈alkylene chain, which is unsubstituted or substituted by one or two -OH or -C(=O)- groups,

R₃ and R₅ each, independently of each other, represent hydrogen, C₁-C₄alkyl or C₂-C₄hydroxyalkyl, R₆ and R₇ each, independently of each other, represent hydrogen, C₁-C₄alkyl or, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bound, complete a pyrrolidino, piperidino or morpholino ring,

A₁ and A₂ are both -SO₃⁻ or -SO₃M,

M, R₂, D₁ and D₂ being as defined according to claim 1.

7. (currently amended): A compound of formula (1), according to claim 6, in which the moieties B₁ and B₂ are identical and represented by the formulae (4) or (5) whereby

R₄ represents the group -X'-NR₆R₇ or the group -X'-N⁺R₃R₆R₇,

X and X' each, independently of each other, represent a C₂-C₄alkylene chain, which is unsubstituted or substituted by -OH,

R₃ and R₅ each, independently of each other, represent hydrogen or C₁-C₄alkyl,

R₆ and R₇ each, independently of each other, represent hydrogen, C₁-C₄alkyl or, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bound, complete a pyrrolidino, piperidino or morpholino ring,

R₂ represents C₁-C₄alkyl,

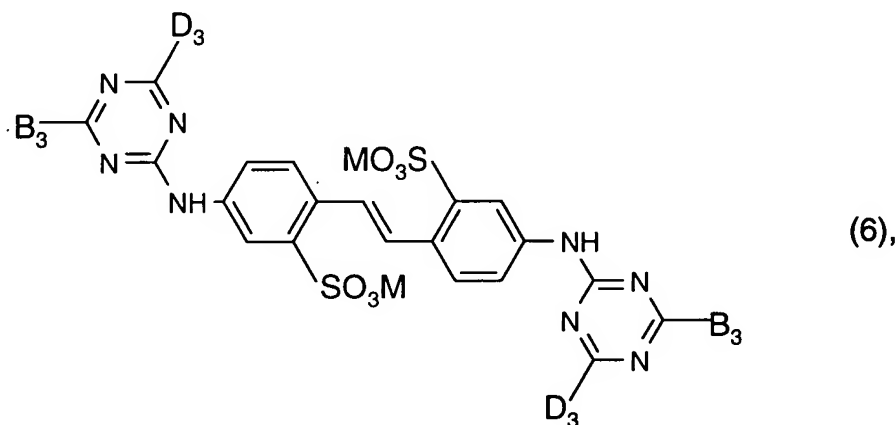
A₁ and A₂ are both -SO₃⁻ or -SO₃M, whereby

M represents hydrogen, potassium or sodium and

D₁ and D₂ are identical and may be represented by halogen, ~~especially chlorine~~, C₁-C₄monoalkyl- or dialkylamino, said alkyl groups being unsubstituted or substituted by mono- or di-C₁-C₄alkylamino or tri-C₁-C₄alkylammonium; C₂-C₄hydroxyalkylamino, C₂-C₄-di(hydroxyalkyl)amino, anilino, an aniline sulphonamide residue or a morpholino-, piperidino- or -N-C₁-C₄alkylsubstituted piperazino ring, ~~an anilino residue being preferred.~~

8. A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (1) as defined in claim 1, or for mixtures of said compounds comprising two components in which the residues A₁ and A₂ are identical, B₁ and B₂ are identical and D₁ and D₂ are identical, and a third component in which the residues A₁ and A₂ are identical, but either, B₁ and B₂ are different or D₁ and D₂ are different, as defined in claim 3, by reacting, under known reaction conditions, cyanuric chloride, successively, in any desired sequence, with each of 4,4'-diaminostilbene-2,2'-disulphonic acid, an amino compound capable of introducing groups B₁ and/or B₂ or precursors or mixtures thereof and an amino compound capable of introducing groups D₁ and/or D₂ or precursors or mixtures thereof, B₁, B₂, D₁ and D₂ being as defined in claim 1.

9. (currently amended): A compound of the formula



wherein

B₃ represents a group of the formula -NH(CH₂)_nNR₈R₉, n being 2, 3 or 4 and

D₃ represents halogen, an anilino, anilino-sulphonic acid or anilino-sulphonamide residue,

R₈ and R₉ each ~~Independently independently~~ of each other, represent hydrogen, C₁-C₄alkyl, C₂-C₄-hydroxyalkyl or, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bound, complete a pyrrolidino, piperidino or morpholino ring and M₇ is as defined in claim 1, with the proviso that those compounds in which D₃ is anilino, B₃ is an N-(3-aminopropyl)-diethanolamino, N,N-dimethyl-1,3-propanediamino or 4-(3'-aminopropyl)morpholine residue or in which D₃ represents a sulphanilamide residue, ~~and~~ B₃ is a 4-(3'-aminopropyl)morpholine residue and M is hydrogen are excluded.

10. (currently amended): A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (6) as defined in claim 9 by reacting, under known reaction conditions, cyanuric chloride, successively, in any desired sequence, with each of 4,4'-diaminostilbene-2,2'-disulphonic acid, an amino compound capable of

introducing groups B_3 and an amino compound capable of introducing groups D_3 , B_3 and D_3 being as defined in claim 9.

11-13 (canceled).

14. (new): A method for optical brightening of synthetic or natural organic materials, which comprises contacting said materials with an aqueous composition comprising a compound of formula (1) as defined in claim 1 or a mixture thereof.

15. (new): A method for optical brightening of paper in pulp, size-press, metering press or coating applications, which comprises contacting said materials with an aqueous composition comprising a compound of formula (1) as defined in claim 1 or a mixture thereof.

16. (new): A method for optical brightening of paper in pulp, size-press, metering press or coating applications, which comprises contacting said materials with an aqueous composition comprising a mixture of compounds of formula (1) as defined in claim 3.